

King Houndekpinkou (b.1987)
Artist



Biography

King Houndekpinkou (b.1987) is a Franco-Beninese artist whose practice repositions the ceramic vessel as a form of spiritual transmission, cultural memory, and material intelligence. Working primarily with clay, his work expands ceramics beyond function and tradition, treating form as a bearer of identity, emotion, and ancestral traditions. He lives and works between France, Japan, and Benin and is a member of the International Academy of Ceramics (IAC).

Raised in the suburbs of Paris, Houndekpinkou's early exposure to 1990s Japanese popular culture (inc. anime, manga, and video games) sparked a lifelong fascination with Japan. In 2012, during his first visit, he inadvertently discovered the existence of the six historical cities of ancestral Japanese pottery known as the *Roku Koyō* (Bizen, Echizen, Seto, Shigaraki, Tamba and Tokoname). Drawn particularly to Bizen, he returned annually to train with local potters of the *Keramos* group, notably Toshiaki Shibuta, whom he considers his "Clay Father."

In Bizen, Houndekpinkou sensed deep affinities between Shinto-inflected ceramic rituals and the Vodun traditions of his Beninese heritage. This synthesis, in which matter is understood as animate, relational, and sacred, became central to his practice. In 2016, he started *Terres Jumelles*, an ongoing platform connecting pottery communities in Benin and Japan.

His vessels operate as hybrid forms, positioned between sculpture, ritual object and archive, activating shared cosmologies rather than fixed identities. Infused with a sense of imagination and fantasy, they transform material into forms that are at once spiritual, narrative, and otherworldly.

In 2017, his work was included in museum exhibition *Regarding George Ohr: Contemporary Ceramics in the Spirit of the Mad Potter* (Boca Raton Museum of Art, USA), curated by Garth Clark, situating his practice within a lineage of artists who have radically expanded the conceptual and sculptural possibilities of the vessel.

A milestone came in 2025, when he exhibited his monumental ceramic sculpture *White Totem of Light* at the Giza Pyramids, highlighting his dedication to craft, materials, and the universal dimension of his work.

That same year, he launched A GOOD SPACE in Melun, France, both his personal art studio and a creative label that extends his practice. Conceived as a platform for experimentation, collaboration, and cultural exchange, it serves as a creative hub, supporting the broader artistic community and fostering new forms of expression across disciplines.

King's work has been shown internationally in museums, biennales, and World Expos across Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Americas, including the Dakar Biennale (Senegal), the Korean International Ceramic Biennale and World Expo Osaka 2025 (Osaka, Japan). His work is held in prominent public collections, including the Grassi Museum of Applied Arts (Germany), Boca Raton Museum of Art (USA), the Republic of Benin Presidency, the Gyeonggi Ceramic Museum of the Korea Ceramic Foundation (South Korea) and the Rhode Island School of Design Museum (USA).

Memberships

Member of the International Academy of Ceramics
Geneva, Switzerland

Member of the Homo Faber Network of the Michelangelo Foundation
Geneva, Switzerland

Education

2014

School of Art and Ceramics Technique
Porte de Vincennes, France

2013 - 2015

Training under Bizen potter Toshiaki Shibuta
Bizen, Japan

2012 - 2014

Mire Workshop, Village St Paul
Paris, France

2007 - 2010

BA (Hons) Public Relations & Communications
Southampton Solent University, Southampton, UK



CV

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2025

Let My Soul Shatter...
Galerie Vallois, Paris, France

2024

Six Prayers
Southern Guild Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2021

Dans Mon Jardin...
Galerie Vallois, Paris, France

2018

Thank you for the clay!
Fujiki Gallery, Shigaraki, Japan

2017

Time on Earth
Vallois America, New York, USA

2016

Terre de Mémoire
Centre – Arts & Cultures, Cotonou, Benin

Selected Biennales / World Expos / International Exhibitions

2025

Forver is Now
Giza Plateau - The Great Pyramids of Giza, Cairo, Egypt
(Under the auspices of the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and under the patronage of UNESCO)

World Expo 2025 – Expo Osaka 2025 – Republic of Benin Pavilion
Yumeshima, Osaka, Japan

2024

Révélation China – International Biennial of Craft and Creation
National Agricultural Exhibition Centre, Beijing, China

2022

Le Bénin en Majesté, Dakar Biennale OFF
Librairie aux 4 Vents, Dakar, Senegal

2022

Homo Faber – Crafting a More Human Future
Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, Italy

2019

10th Korean International Ceramic Biennale
Incheon World Ceramic Center, Incheon, South Korea

Biennale Internationale des Métiers d'Art & Création Révélation 2019
"Le Banquet"
Le Grand Palais, Paris, France

Selected Museum Exhibitions

2025

German & International Ceramics Since 1946
Grassi Museum of Applied Arts, Leipzig, Germany

2024

Liberatory Living: Protective Interiors and Radical Black Joy
Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD), San Francisco, USA

2023

Art Du Bénin, d'Hier et d'Aujourd'hui: de la Restitution à la Révélation – Contemporain
Musée Mohammed VI d'Art Moderne & Contemporain, Rabat, Morocco

2022

Collection Viviane S.
Museu Del Càntir, Argentona, Spain

2021

Cultural Affairs: Art Without Borders
Grassi Museum of Applied Arts, Leipzig, Germany

2020

International Academy of Ceramics Exhibition
Guozhong Ceramic Art Museum, Beijing, China

2019

An Idea Needing to be Made: Contemporary Ceramics
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, Australia

2017

Regarding George Ohr: Contemporary Ceramics in the Spirit of the Mad Potter
Boca Raton Museum of Art, Florida, USA
(curated by Garth Clark)

CV

Selected Group Exhibitions

2025

Sacred Intersection
Muse Contemporary Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey

Révélation! Art Contemporain du Bénin
La Conciergerie – Palais de la Cité, Paris, France

2023

Parcours des Mondes 2023: King Houndekpinkou & Franck Zanfanhouédé
Galerie Vallois, Paris, France

2022

Ceramics Now
Galerie Italienne, Paris, France

Art Du Bénin, d'Hier et d'Aujourd'hui: de la Restitution à la Révélation
The Republic of Benin's Palace / Palais de la Marina, Cotonou, Benin

2021

SPRING 1883
Sarah Scout Presents Gallery, Melbourne, Australia

1:54 – Redefining the Trends, Histories in the Making
Christie's London, London, UK

Royal Academy of Arts: Summer Exhibition 2021
Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK

2020

Là où l'Âme se Plaît
Carrousel du Louvre, Paris, France
(Curated by Galerie Vallois and UNESCO)

2019

Polyartworks | Performer
Minnano Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2019

Visceral Clay: Look Don't Touch
Gerald Peters Projects, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

2018

Céramique Contemporaine: les artistes de Viviane S.
Abbaye de Léhon, Dinan, France
(curated by Stéphanie Le Follic-Hadida, IAC/UNESCO)

Palau de Casavells – Summer Exhibition
Palau de Casavells, Girona, Spain

Vasa Vasorum | The Vase in Contemporary Art + Design
Peters Projects, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA
(curated by Garth Clark)

Clay Gulgong 2018: The Masters' Show
Gulgong, New South Wales, Australia

Business as Usual
Minnano Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2017

Africa Blooms Japan
Cat Street Gallery, Hong Kong

2016

Kaïdin & King: l'éternel de l'immatériel
Espace Christiane Peugeot, Paris, France

Hommage au Bénin, 20 artistes contemporains Béninois
Château de Tanlay, France

2015

Temps modernes, la mémoire de l'esclavage et l'art contemporain
Galerie Vallois, Paris, France

Coco Fronsac & King
Galerie Vallois, Paris, France

CV

Selected International Art Fairs

2025

AKAA - Also Known as Africa - Contemporary Art Fair
Le Carreau du Temple, Paris, France

Contemporary Istanbul BLOOM
Istanbul, Turquie

Quarantine Art Fair
Point Nepean, Melbourne, Australia

2024

Design Miami/
Miami Beach, Florida, USA

Investec – Cape Town Art Fair
Cape Town International Convention Centre, Cape Town, South Africa

Ceramic Brussels 2024
Tours & Taxis, Brussels, Belgium

2022

1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair – New York
Harlem Parish, New York, USA

2022

Enter Art Fair
Tunnelfabrikken, Copenhagen

PAD Paris – Design + Art
Tuileries, Paris, France

Artgenève
Palexpo, Geneva, Switzerland

2021

ST-ART – Foire Européenne d'art contemporain & de design
Parc des Expositions, Strasbourg, France

2021

Art X Lagos
The Federal Palace, Lagos, Nigeria

2019

The Salon Art + Design
Park Avenue Armory, New York, USA

KOGEI – Art Fair Kanazawa
The Share Hotels, Kanazawa, Japan

Art Fair Tokyo 2019
Tokyo International Forum, Tokyo, Japan

2018

1-54 - Contemporary African Art Fair
La Mamounia Palace, Marrakech, Morocco

Art Paris Art Fair
Le Grand Palais, Paris, France

Selected Prizes, Competitions

2019

Honorable Mention
10th Korean International Ceramic Biennale
Incheon World Ceramic Center, Incheon, South Korea

Selected Artist Residencies

2024

Southern Guild Artist-in-Residence Program, Cape Town, South Africa

2018

Shigaraki Ceramic Culture Park, Shigaraki, Japan

2016

Le Centre Arts & Culture, Cotonou, Benin

Selected Brand collaborations

2023

Glenfiddich x King Houndekpinkou: Tokyo After Dark
Harrods, London, UK

CV

Selected Collections

Rhode Island School of Design Museum (RISD)
Rhode Island, USA

Collection of H.R.H. Franz, Duke of Bavaria
Munich, Germany

Grassi Museum of Applied Art
Leipzig, Germany

The Republic of Benin Presidency
Cotonou, The Republic of Benin

Embassy of the Republic of Benin to Japan
Tokyo, Japan

Gyeonggi Ceramic Museum Korea Ceramic Foundation
Gyeonggi, South Korea

Boca Raton Museum of Art
Boca Raton, Florida, USA

Barbara Bluhm-Kaul
Chicago, USA

Le Petit Musée de la Récade
Cotonou, The Republic of Benin

Conferences / Panels / Symposiums / Lectures

2019

Lecture / Public Program – An Idea Needing to be Made: Contemporary Ceramics Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, Australia

Lecture / Educator's Program – An Idea Needing to be Made: Contemporary Ceramics Manningham Art Studios, Melbourne, Australia

Lecture / King Houndekpinkou: Connecting with the Clay, Beyond all Borders Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Japan

Lecture / King Houndekpinkou: Connecting with the Clay, Beyond all Borders Seika Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan

Panel / Trans-Pacific Dialogue: Marrying Form and Surface Across the Globe
Panel discussion featuring Glenn Barkley (AUS), Virginia Leonard (NZ), Andrew Casto (USA), David Hicks (USA) and Mindy Solomon (USA)
The University of Iowa / NCECA 2019, Minneapolis Convention Center, USA

2018

Lecture / Clay Gulgong 2018 Gulgong New South Wales, Australia

2017

Lecture / Regarding George Ohr: Contemporary Ceramics in the Spirit of the Mad Potter Florida Atlantic University, Florida, USA

2016

Residency conference / Terre de Mémoire Le Centre Arts & Culture, Cotonou, Benin

Selected Exhibitions



International Exhibition

Forever is Now

2025

Giza Plateau, Egypt



International Exhibition

Forever is Now

2025

Giza Plateau, Egypt



Solo Exhibition

Six Prayers

2024

Southern Guild Gallery

Cape Town, South Africa



Solo Exhibition

Six Prayers

2024

Southern Guild Gallery

Cape Town, South Africa



Institutional Exhibition

Révélation! Art Contemporain du Bénin

2024

La Conciergerie – Palais de la Cité
Paris, France



Institutional Exhibition

Révélation! Art Contemporain du Bénin

2024

La Conciergerie – Palais de la Cité
Paris, France



KING HOUNDEKPINKOU



FR Né en 1987 en France, à Montreuil, dans une famille béninoise qui parle fon, et mina, King Houndekpinkou est fasciné dans sa jeunesse par les jeux vidéo japonais. Il s'est formé auprès de la maître céramiste japonaise Kayoko Hayasaki, qui utilise la cuisson au bois et recherche l'harmonie dans la symétrie. Diplômé de l'école parisienne des Arts et techniques céramiques (ATC), et membre de l'Académie internationale de la céramique (AIC), Houndekpinkou travaille en France, au Japon et au Bénin. Mélangeant les argiles du Bénin à celles du monde entier, ses productions interrogent les frontières entre l'art et l'artisanat et représentent une expérience unique d'hybridation culturelle : « L'argile est comme une encyclopédie. La matière est d'où ton vient ».

EN Born in Montreuil, France, in 1987 to a Beninese family that speaks Fon and Mina, King Houndekpinkou was fascinated in his youth by Japanese video games. He studied under Japanese master ceramicist Kayoko Hayasaki, who fires pottery with wood and seeks harmony in asymmetry. A graduate of the Arts et Techniques Céramiques (ATC) school in Paris, and a member of the International Academy of Ceramics (AIC), Houndekpinkou works in France, Japan, and Benin. Blending clays from Benin with clays from around the world, his productions examine the borders between art and artistry, and represent a unique experience of cultural hybridisation. "Clay is like an encyclopedia. Its content tells us where we come from."

GRAND TOTEM

Céramique émaillée et peinte, mélange d'argiles béninoises, japonaises et nord-américaines, émail bleu, peinture bleue mate, or, 2020
Collection par roulotte
© ADAGP



Ceramic Biennale

10th Korean International Ceramic Biennale

2019

Incheon World Ceramic Center
Incheon, South Korea



Ceramic Biennale

10th Korean International Ceramic Biennale

2019

Incheon World Ceramic Center
Incheon, South Korea



Solo Exhibition

Thank You for the Clay

2018

Fujiki Gallery
Shigaraki, Japan



Solo Exhibition

Thank You for the Clay

2018

Fujiki Gallery
Shigaraki, Japan



Museum Exhibition

*Regarding George Ohr: Contemporary
Ceramics in the Spirit of the Mad Potter*

2017

Boca Raton Museum of Art
Florida, USA



Museum Exhibition

*Regarding George Ohr: Contemporary
Ceramics in the Spirit of the Mad Potter*

2017

Boca Raton Museum of Art
Florida, USA



Solo Exhibition

Time on Earth

2017

Vallois America
New York, USA



Solo Exhibition

Time on Earth

2017

Vallois America
New York, USA



Selected Works



Selected Works

Tears of Angels on My Beautiful Skin

2025

Glazed ceramics

90 x 48 x 48 cm

Price: 22 000€ + VAT



Selected Works

Tears of Angels on My Beautiful Skin

2025

Glazed ceramics

90 x 48 x 48 cm

Price: 22 000€ + VAT



Selected Works

My Hands Will Heal It Back - Blue

2025

Glazed ceramic shards on painted wooden canvas

40 x 40 x 5 cm

Price: 4 500€ + VAT



Selected Works

Bubble Tea Doll Totem

2025

Glazed ceramics

63 x 40 x 40 cm

Price: 10 000€ + VAT



Selected Works

Bubble Tea Doll Totem

2025

Glazed ceramics

63 x 40 x 40 cm

Price: 10 000€ + VAT



Selected Works

Where Do You Choose to Stand in Chaos? I

2025

Clay, acrylic paint on canvas

100 x 100 x 5 cm

Price: 8 000€ + VAT



Selected Works

Where Do You Choose to Stand in Chaos? I

2025

Clay, acrylic paint on canvas

100 x 100 x 5 cm

Price: 8 000€ + VAT



Selected Works

The Widow of Light: A Shining Light to the World in Troubled Times

2024

Glazed ceramics

61 x 41 x 41 cm

Price: 13 000€ + VAT



Selected Projects





King Houndekpinkou x Alex Huanfa Cheng

Let My Soul Shatter..., 2025
Melun, France

Let My Soul Shatter... is a deeply personal photo project by King Houndekpinkou, in collaboration with photographer Alex Huanfa Cheng, born from the creation of his new studio, A GOOD SPACE®, in Melun. Transforming chaos into art, he reimagines fragments of renovation debris and unused ceramics into a work that explores resilience, healing, and the restorative power of making.



King Houndekpinkou x Glenfiddich

Tokyo After Dark, 2023
Harrods, London, UK

The collaboration between the Japanese-inspired ceramicist and the single malt Scotch whisky Glenfiddich, finished in exceptionally rare ex-Awamori casks (Japan's oldest spirits, it is said to have a history of 600 years) is a celebration of their shared respect and knowledge of Japanese culture, concepts and traditions. The installation is a luxury reimagining of an izakaya, infused with King's experiences in Japan and the inspiration he has taken from Hanami: the ancient tradition where Japan appreciates the fleeting beauty of nature through the cherry blossom, a time for renewal and optimism. King also re-interprets Yakishime, a wood firing technique of ancient Japanese pottery, which gives a specific raw texture to his ceramics.



King Houndekpinkou x Alex Huanfa Cheng

Dans Mon Jardin, 2021
Paris, France

Photo project led by photographer Alex Huanfa Cheng for the eponymous exhibition *Dans Mon Jardin* in Paris, France.



King Houndekpinkou x The Republic of Benin Embassy to Japan

Benin Embassy to Japan, 2019
Tokyo, Japan

Sculptures commissioned by the Benin Embassy, offered as official gifts to his Japanese counterparts. The sculptures were made out of clays from Benin and Japan and symbolise the friendship between both countries. They represent a traditional Beninese saying of King Ghézo, a rough translation follows - "The holed jar contains the water that will give the country happiness. If all the children came, with their fingers assembled to plug the holes, the liquid would not flow and the country would be saved"



King Houndekpinkou x Alex Huanfa Cheng

De Passage sur Terre, 2017
Etretat, France

Photo project led by photographer Alex Huanfa Cheng for the eponymous exhibition *De Passage sur Terre* in Paris, France and New York, US.



King Houndekpinkou

Terres Jumelles, since 2016
Benin and Japan

Terres Jumelles (eng. Twin Soils) is a creative journey that consists in fostering cross-cultural dialogue between Benin and Japan by creating bonds between local ceramic practitioners in both countries. Initiated in 2016, *Terres Jumelles* highlights the similarities and the differences that exist in the traditions of Beninese and Japanese ceramics. To achieve this, the projet documents various practices of clay work (artistic, utilitarian...) via crossed interviews, stories, short documentaries and photographs.

Contact details

For studio visits or access to the online viewing room, please email info@kinghoundekpinkou.com

Website: www.kinghoundekpinkou.com

Instagram: [king.houndekpinkou](https://www.instagram.com/king.houndekpinkou)

